

THE EYE SHIELD



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MESSAGE FROM ME

Welcome to issue twenty-two of The Eye Shield. There's the last part of Steven Webberley's article about his favourite deaths this issue, so thanks once again for sharing those with me, Steven. Elsewhere there are the latest instalments of all the regular TES articles, including the long overdue return of *The Big Issue*. Of all the TES articles, this is the one that I find hardest to write, but as I did promise you Skarkill versus Lissard way back in issue 10, I have decided that it's high time to deliver. While we're on this subject, I am happily celebrating two years as TES editor this month. My thanks to those of you who still regularly read and enjoy The Eye Shield. By the way, if anyone wants to see TES retain its somewhat faltering fanzine status, you had better send me an article by September. Anyway, enjoy this issue for now, loyal readers!

Challenge question: Who is the last character ever to be seen on Nightmare?

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Eye Shield.

Hi, my name's Michael and I've just discovered this site whilst doing a search for all things *Nightmare*. I'm 18 and all my friends and I used to watch this show. I was really mystified and confused when it finished, as I can't actually remember hearing that the show would end at the time, just not seeing it in listings magazines. Are the stories in *Adventure Time* actual records of real quests?

No, they're not - I make them all up with a mixture of characters and puzzles from the programme. The dungeoneers are named after my friends. The ones I let win are the friends I really like. Classic Quest is the place to read about actual quests from the programme. Your experiences in finding out about Nightmare's demise sound very much like my own. Thanks for getting in touch with me, Michael.

Dear Eye Shield.

My name is Pam Glennie. First and foremost congrats on TES! It's absolutely fantastic! What a read! I have always loved Nightmare - it was my favourite show as a child and now it remains my favourite. I love season 4 but that's probably because Pickle's in it and if he were a real person (elf?) I would marry him.

Each to their own, I suppose. Thanks for that, Pam. I'm very pleased that you enjoy TES so much. Do keep reading and you never know when something about Pickle will pop up. You could even send me an article about him if you like.

REMEMBER THIS?

Series 2/3. Level 3.

MEDUSA'S STARE

Only encountered towards the very end of a quest, this darkened chamber combined ornate decoration and a single solitary exit with the ghastly face and writhing snake-hair of Medusa on the wall opposite where the dungeoneer entered. As we know from our Greek legends, Medusa was a Gorgon whose stare had the power to turn people into stone. As Treguard explained, the dungeoneer and advisors were in danger of being turned to stone by Medusa's stare and had to find some way of blocking it. As this was level three, the action needed to be quick and decisive. Merlin's GRIP spell was enough for Leo and friends to freeze Medusa's stare in series 3, but the two encounters with Medusa in series 2 were both absolute classic Nightmare moments. Early in the series, Chris from St. Helens became the second dungeoneer ever to reach level three. The team foolishly left behind the magic shield in the clue room, and were defenceless against Medusa's stare as Treguard calmly explained to them. All four members of the team really did turn to stone - a wonderful moment. (*"It seems that all I'm going to get out of you lot is a stony silence!" - Treguard.*)

Even more enjoyable was Julian's arrival in Medusa's chamber later in the series. Thankfully he did have the magic shield, but holding it up to block Medusa's stare was not enough to complete this challenge. While Julian had the shield to protect him, the advisors were only able to look at the screen for a few seconds at a time. Treguard helped them to take it in turns to guide Julian out in what is possibly my favourite scene from Nightmare in its entirety. Once the advisors had stopped giggling, they sent poor Julian all over the place before he made it out of the chamber - Becca even sent him crashing headlong into a wall. It was a tense but amusing moment and it's well worth watching. Julian made it out and went on to win, of course, but his encounter with Medusa was undoubtedly the highlight of his quest. So, Medusa was a good third-level challenge that bagged a victim - well worth a page of TES praise!

Difficulty: 10 Confusing and tricky in series 2 - as difficult as they get.

Killer Instinct: 8 One victim out of three attempts - commendable.

Gore Factor: 7 Chris and friends really could be seen to turn to stone.

Fairness: 5 Those were the days when level three could be really tough!

ADVENTURE TIME

After Callie's thrilling victory last time, the score is Dungeon 7, Humans 3. James and friends are in level one, carrying a red gem and a jar of frogs' legs. Game on!

James finds himself in the Great Corridor of the Catacombs. At the far end, the Automatum stands idle.

"Hurry team, for this is not a good spot to rest" Treguard urges them. "In fact, I think you've been spotted."

A loud clanking and whirring fills the chamber as the Automatum begins to advance. James's advisors immediately direct him through the right hand door. He emerges into Mildread's cave. As usual, the old witch is muttering to herself as she stirs her cauldron.

"Have a care here, team" Treguard advises. "Mildread may help you if you're able to please her, but she's just as likely to toss you into her stew."

"Hello, young mugwump" Mildread slurps when she sees James. "Are you lost? Well, don't worry. I have a place you can go where you'll never be found!"

"Er, that's alright" James manages to say as he tries to fathom this odd statement. "I'm not really lost; I'm on the quest for the Cup."

"And I suppose you think you know all there is to know about the Dungeon?" Mildread sneers. "Well you don't, see? But Mildread does. Mildread knows, for instance, that you need a password to leave this level. Mildread also knows that you don't have one. Now, what could you do to make Mildread give you one...?"

"I'll give you these frogs' legs" James offers hopefully.

"Yes, very nice" Mildread states as she rushes over and snatches the jar. "These will provide some much needed flavour to my stew. Alright then, dungeoneer. The password is *hobgoblin*. Now get moving, before I really do make a stew out of you."

James is quickly directed out, into the blocker's chamber. The wall grates forwards and forms the awesome face.

"Password!" it demands.

"Hobgoblin" calls James.

The blocker shoots off, leaving the exit clear. James is directed out, into the wellway room.

"I see that you have found the wellway to level two" Treguard remarks. "But beware; these things are seldom unguarded."

Sure enough, Fatilla lumbers into the room and blocks James's path to

the well.

"You won't be leaving the level this way, dungerperson" he leers menacingly. "Unless you can persuade me to turn a blind eye to your escape."

"I'll give you this red gem" James pipes up.

"A firestone!" explodes Fatilla. "That's dragon food, and I'm no dragon. Don't you have anything else?"

"No" James replies sorrowfully.

"In that case" Fatilla shouts in glee. "I'll just have to blip you and then blop you!"

The advisors see the screen go black as the barbarian does exactly that.

"Ooh, nasty" Treguard grimaces. "Well, you didn't do too well with Phelheim, team, and you paid the price. Spellcasting: D-I-S-M-I-S-S."

Next to take the challenge is Abby. She begins her quest in the cave of Smirkenorff. The dragon's head is sticking out of the pit. His eyes raise when he sees his visitor.

"Ah, you're here at last" Smirkenorff breathes thankfully. "You must be the dungeoneer called Abby. Is that right?"

"I am" Abby agrees.

"I'm afraid I have some rather distressing news for you" Smirky says cautiously. "Mogdred has been making mischief down in level two, and has blocked off all the exits from level one. Now the only way for you to get to level two is for me to fly you there."

"How unfortunate" Abby remarks. "So, um, will you?"

"If you can find a firestone or dragon mint to fuel me for the trip" Smirkenorff responds. "Meet me at the Great Door at the end of the level, and we'll see what we can do."

"Thanks" says Abby. "I'll be there."

Smirkenorff's head sinks out of sight. The advisors direct Abby out, into the level one clue room. On the table are a folderol, a bar of gold and a gauntlet.

"Touch nothing yet, Abby" Treguard warns. "These objects come at a price."

The far wall shimmers and Brangwen's face appears.

"If you wish for truth you must show knowledge" the wall monster states. "And to show knowledge you must give me truth. With three riddles I shall test your worth, and here is my first. In the darkest dungeon cold, the miner goes in search of gold. Short of leg, yet strong of arm. If you take what's his, he'll do you harm."

"Dwarf" replies Abby.

"Truth accepted" returns Brangwen. "Here is my second. Parasite on

trees it is, berries white it is. Kisses it gets. Name it."

The team remain silent for a while.

"Could you repeat it?" Abby requests.

"Once only" Brangwen asserts. "Parasite on trees it is, berries white it is. Kisses it gets. Name it."

"Come now team, this question is festively themed" Treguard hints.

"Mistletoe!" blurts out Abby in a burst of inspiration.

"Truth accepted," says Brangwen again. "Here is my third. But for one letter, this would be all that exists. The more you take away from it, the bigger it gets."

"Eternity" Abby says confidently.

"Falsehood" smirks Brangwen smugly. "Hole was the truth I sought. Two is the score, you may learn more. Your quest is for the Shield, but it will not defend you. The prize of queens is the metal of kings. The first step is the *sword thrust*."

As Brangwen disappears, Abby's advisors tell her to take the gold and the folderol. They then direct her out. She emerges into the Corridor of the Catacombs. A group of four goblins is visible up the far end.

"Warning, team, these creatures can be deadly" says Treguard. "Make your exit speedily."

The advisors quickly direct Abby through the nearest door as a horn blast sounds throughout the corridor. The next room has two doors, one to the left and one to the right. There is a table between them. Motley is sitting on it.

"Hello Helmet Face" the jester greets Abby boisterously. "What are you doing here?"

"I'm on the quest for the Shield" Abby returns. "My name is Abby."

"My name's Motley" he bows in return. "And speaking of things that are mine, that folderol is. Mine, I mean. But I know your sort; I won't be getting it back for free, will I?"

"I didn't make the rules" shrugs Abby. "Have you got any firestones or dragon mints?"

"Oh yes, I always keep a dragon mint on me" Motley nods. "That's no problem. Here you go."

The swap is done, and Abby thanks Motley for the mint.

"Now, what about these doors?" Motley continues coyly. "Left or right, but only one is correct. I'll tell you that if you want to meet Queen Kalina, you'd best take the door to the left of the door to the right. If you'd rather meet a group of hungry goblins, take the other one. If you do get through, remember that the second step is the *spear throw*. Right, that's all the extra help you're getting. See you around."

Motley skips off. The team decide that they would rather meet Kalina than more goblins, so they direct Abby to the left. She emerges into the queen's grand throne room. Kalina is combing her hair.

"Oh for goodness sake!" she exclaims when she sees Abby. "Is there no peace in this place? Who are you?"

"I'm Abby, a dungeoneer" comes the reply. "I'm, er, sorry to have disturbed you."

"It is good of you to apologise, but I'm still very upset" Kalina whines. "My preparations for tonight's dinner are ruined."

"Oh dear, team, an upset queen is not a good thing" Treguard grins. "You'd best find some way to appease her if you want to leave here in one piece."

"Perhaps this bar of gold would cheer you up?" Abby suggests.

"Considerably" Kalina agrees. "Give it to me."

Abby hands over the ingot, and Kalina smiles at it approvingly.

"Thank you, Abby" the queen smiles. "You may go on your way, but before you do, know this as the truth. The password for this level is *preening*. Good luck on your journey."

Abby thanks Kalina, and is directed out.

What next for Abby? How long will the score stand at 8-3? Find out in the next Adventure Time.

PUZZLE PAGE ONE

Nothing too complicated here, readers - just name the character responsible for each of these memorable Knightmare quotes. Of course, the series, episode and dungeoneer for each one will also be in the answers section - how many can you remember?

1. "Three times I will demand truth. Three times may you answer. Fail three times and I feed on you."
2. "Yes, I could give you some information, like the melting point of some metals."
3. "I had a dagger once called Gath, but I lost it in a dwarf!"
4. "The deep spells I recall, but the elementary magic I have forgotten. Jog my memory three times and a little magic is yours."
5. "Rather like cats we take our own paths, we know no master."
6. "One suspects from your dress that you are part of this absurd quest."
7. "Before I allow you to leave, you must present me with some lovely thing."
8. "A donation to Mother Church would be in order, but I fear you're going to need every penny you've got."
9. "This is a strange land, and getting stranger than you could ever imagine."
10. "I enjoy observing fear; I shall enjoy observing yours!"

REMEMBER HIM?

Series 2/3. Level 1/2.

OLAF

Olaf was an orange-haired Viking who guarded some of the portals in levels one and two. He had a green surcoat and a horned helmet, which were worn by Tom Karol. A dungeoneer might encounter Olaf guarding a well, doorway or bridge and he would immediately demand "lootings" in his heavy Scandinavian accent: *"You have some lootings for Olaf, yes? If no lootings then I be thumping you on the head; sorry, but the orders is the orders."* - **Olaf**. He would often present the choice of "looting" or "pillaging" to the dungeoneer, meaning that he required a bribe in order to let them pass. Just like any Dungeon guard, Olaf was never averse to a bar of gold or a precious stone, but the price for getting past him was not always so high.

In series 2, Chris gave him an egg timer as a bribe, and in series 3 Julie managed to get past him at the expense of a candle. Such items could hardly be considered valuable, suggesting that perhaps Olaf was a couple of Norsemen short of a longboat. It is fair to say that Olaf was quite easy to bribe, at any rate. (*"He's the sort of guard you could bribe with his own laundry."* - **Motley**.) If you want further evidence of this, look at Julian's famous invisible sorcerer's stone ruse at the end of level two. Gumboil had earlier fallen for the trick, but at least he was drunk at the time - I guess Olaf was just easier to fool. Olaf was not always such a pushover, however, and sometimes it would take magic or trickery to get past him.

In series 2, Olaf refused to let dungeoneer Stuart past even with the bribe of a pot of honey. Fortunately enough for Stuart, a swarm of bees arrived and distracted Olaf while the dungeoneer escaped, a scene that was redone in the very next episode with the Troll and a jar of humbugs, and also three years later with Richard II and Skarkill. In series 3, Ross found himself without the means to bribe Olaf and had to use a spell called BIG, which turned Ross into a giant so that he could scare Olaf off, a scene that was redone three years later with Sofia and Julius Scaramonger.

So, Olaf was a slightly ridiculous character with his silly accent and phrases, but his threats were real enough. Although his "lack of mental

agility" - as Motley put it - made him easy to bribe on occasions, he sometimes showed himself to be more of a danger to the quest and he could have bagged himself a victim under the right circumstances just as characters like Cedric and Skarkill did. It would be easy to criticise Olaf for his faults, but I personally enjoyed his appearances and will remember him as a good character who presented a real threat on occasions.

Fear Factor: 5 A bit of a joke character, although his threats were real.

Killer Instinct: 2 Could and would have killed for the lack of a spell or bribe.

Humour Rating: 7 A laughable character, often to be heard laughing.

Oscar Standard: 8 Tom Karol: the master of accents.

STEVEN'S TOP FIFTEEN NIGHTMARE DEATHS

Here is the final part of this countdown as Steven tells us about his top five favourite Nightmare deaths.

5. Series 2, episode 6. Series 4, episode 3.

Mogdred finished off Tony and Helen II. He provided some truly memorable lines. One particularly excellent one was this: "Welcome to one of Mogdred's little playpens, dungeoneer. Play awhile. Play forever!" Lord Fear never really killed a dungeoneer personally. Do we actually know how Nicola in series 7 was killed? (*See this section next issue for more on this subject - Jake.*)

4. Series 1, episode 2. Series 2, episodes 7 and 14.

Lillith's lair halted some of Nightmare's weakest teams: Mave, Akash and Anthony. You should always read the labels on bottles carefully.

3. Series 2, episode 11. Series 4, episode 7.

Ariadne made two killings, both of which were unpleasant. Jamie's team panicked and didn't collect all the pieces of a MEDAL spell whilst being followed by the Automatum. Nicky's team didn't have a spell from Merlin to get past the giant spider.

2. Series 4, episode 5. Series 5, episodes 6 & 15. Series 8, episode 4.

This had to be in the top ten. For ultimate gore factor, the Corridor of Blades has no equal. It gave Duncan no mercy, and corrected three dungeoneers' manoeuvring skills - permanently. Daniel's death in his truly classic quest was particularly cruel and gruesome. Sarah and Alistair's quests were by no means less deserving of a win.

1. Series 8, episode 1.

Well, it had to be. There is something spectacular and chilling about seeing a dungeoneer being roasted to a crisp by a dry-voiced mythical reptilian. And with a short and dire performance by Richard's team, it was well deserved.

And there you have it. Thanks for all those, Steven - some real classics!

CLASSIC QUEST

Series 6

Quest: The Sword of Freedom.

Dungeoneer: Alan Davis.

Advisors: Jim, Nick and Mark.

Home town: St. Albans.

Team score: 7 out of 10.

Another high-quality quest from series 6 this time, which I used to particularly enjoy because the team lived very close to my town.

Level One: In the first clue room, Alan looks through the spyglass to see Lord Fear instructing Sylvester Hands to impersonate a hero in order to gain Alan's trust and friendship before despatching him. After he has finished with Hands, Fear receives a call from Julius Scaramonger, who explains to Lord Fear that Ah Wok's arrival in Wolfenden has been damaging his business recently. In return for some goblin clubs, Fear agrees to do Julius a favour by getting rid of Ah Wok with a SAMURAI spell. Alan takes a bar of gold and a musical scroll from the table. In Wolfenden, Alan meets Hands in the guise of Konan the Vegetarian. After showing off for a while, Hands invites Alan to join him for a drink in the pub later on.

In the marketplace, Alan meets Ah Wok. Lord Fear's spectral samurai assassin soon arrives to slay the stallholder, but one of the advisors dispels Lord Fear's spell and the samurai warrior disappears. Ah Wok is very grateful for his rescue, and gives Alan a silver bar and the password - skeleton - in return for the gold. In the inn, Alan meets a drunken Sylvester Hands, but Ridolfo soon arrives and sees him off with his sword. In return for the musical scroll, the minstrel tells Alan the causeway code. Once he has passed the blocker with the password and crossed the causeway, Alan meets Smirkenorff at the end of the level. The dragon grudgingly agrees to fly to level two in exchange for the silver. A dragonflight sequence duly follows, and Alan arrives in the second level.

Level Two: Alan meets Sidriss, who has been turned ugly by foolishly messing about with cosmetic magic. Alan agrees to find some magic to restore Sidriss's looks, and is told to call her when he has done so. The clue room follows, where Alan picks up a gauntlet and a bag of gold.

Through the spyglass, Lord Fear shows Skarkill a small chest which, he explains, contains a Medusa Eye, which will turn anyone who looks at it into stone. Amongst the Rocks of Bruin, Alan meets Lord Fear in person, which is a rare occurrence in a quest and this was the first time it happened. Fear is disguised as Hordriss in disguise as Harris the beggar, and he manages to persuade Alan to swap his gold for the box containing the Medusa Eye. Alan then swaps this item for a BEAUTY spell from Heggaty.

Whatever the diminutive witch intends the Eye to be used for remains a mystery to this day, but Alan is able to call Sidriss and return her beauty to her. In return, Sidriss reveals the password - scarify - and that the way to the third level lies by ship. Alan uses the password to get rid of Dreadnort, and then comes across an enlarged version of Lord Fear's hand in an enclosed chamber. Fear refuses to let Alan pass, and after much coaxing from Treguard the team tell Alan to put on the gauntlet. This causes a large magic gauntlet to appear and restrain Lord Fear's marauding hand while Alan escapes. In the dwarf tunnels, Alan picks up a key and then arrives on the galleon Cloudwalker, which is bound for level three.

Level Three: On the deck of the ship, Elita appears and insults Alan for a while before skipping off. Below decks, Alan finds a scroll telling him to abandon ship as well as another spyglass. Through this, the team see Lord Fear instructing a limping Skarkill to take Rhark and Tiny into level three to intercept Alan, and to take the even path on the causeway. Fear then calls Captain Nemanor in his pool to ask if he has seen any dungeoneers on his ship. Nemanor is none too receptive to Fear's questions, but the mariner assures the evil sorcerer that he will kill any stowaways he finds onboard.

Elita pops up again next and tasks Alan with stealing a firestone from Ariadne in order to gain her help later in the level. The eye shield takes Alan through a hatchway and into some more dwarf tunnels, where Skarkill and his goblins are lurking in the shadows. After sneaking past them, Alan emerges onto the causeway. Despite the fact that they have the combination, the team are much too slow in their direction and Alan falls to his doom before he has barely taken one step forward, bringing a somewhat abrupt and unexpected end to the quest. (*"I warned you, you've got to be quick in level three. And now I shall be quick. Farewell, boys. - Treguard."*)

Summary: A commendable performance, but they turned out to be a bit too slow when it really counted.

CREATURE FEATURE

Series 6. Level 1/2.

STORMGEISTS

These were kind of a replacement for skull ghosts in the technologically revamped series 6. As Tim Child mentioned in an article in *The Quest*, the term "geist" comes from the German for "ghost", and that is as good a definition as any for these creatures. Stormgeists appeared as computer-generated blue or grey skulls that would float around the chamber attempting to reach the dungeoneer and feed off their life force. They emitted an eerie wailing noise and often caused the team to panic quite a bit as they were clearly in danger from the strange new creature. However, as with so many creatures and monsters, stormgeists were only ever intended to scare and hurry up the teams rather than kill them off. If you judge them with this purpose in mind, the stormgeists performed their job in the Dungeon very well, floating into chambers and scaring the teams into making a quick exit. Treguard and Pickle were always keen to point out how dangerous the stormgeists could be (*"Touching a haunting like this can result in serious damage!" - Treguard*) which added to the sense of danger and urgency whenever a geist appeared.

The appearances were far from ineffectual, with life force damage being sustained on several occasions as a dungeoneer blundered foolishly into the path of a geist. Who could forget Sofia's encounter with a stormgeist in the first dwarf tunnel of level two? She had stopped in front of a turning and a geist began to float out of the tunnel to block her path. Immediately the three generally level-headed advisors began to panic and scream instructions at Sofia, who very nearly became trapped on the wrong side of the geist. And then there was January, who was accosted by a geist in the level two clue room before she had chosen any objects. The team's hurried choice was undoubtedly part of their downfall, as I'm sure the purse of silver would have been more useful than the firestone for dealing with Julius Scaramonger. Even with only one series, stormgeists were effective scarers, and memorable Nightmare monsters.

Fear Factor: 7 Eerie and unnerving.

Killer Instinct: 3 Caused some life force damage.

Gore Factor: 5 A disembodied head is always a bit gruesome.

Humanity: 4 Perhaps they were once human, but who knows?

PUZZLE PAGE TWO

It's the same deal as before - get those brains into gear, readers!

11. "My name is not amusing, nothing about me is amusing!"
12. "Just because you've got a face like a goblin's backside doesn't mean you have to keep it hidden all the time."
13. "I really do like looking down on everyone else; comes naturally, y'know?"
14. "A bargain was made, a pledge was given, and now it has been redeemed."
15. "Tick-tock, tick-tock, I quite forgot to watch the clock."
16. "I walk, my lord. Gracefully, of course."
17. "If you send your charges this deep then you cannot expect my mercy."
18. "If you are one of the Opposition know that though I carry no weapons I am far from powerless."
19. "You'll never make a good miner, but you might make a good dungeoneer."
20. "The Dungeon dimensions below do not exist as a real world, so we must blindfold you with this helmet to prevent you from being destroyed by illusion."

THE BIG ISSUE

It's time for the belated return of this feature, where two similar Nightmare characters go head-to-head to see which one is best at what they do. As promised in issue 10, you can now choose between Lord Fear's right-hand men, Skarkill and Lissard.

SKARKILL: The goblin master in series 5 and 6, played by Rayner Bourton. His principle role was to kidnap dungeoneers by putting them in his manacles, but he also acted as Lord Fear's right-hand man in series 6.

Advantages: Skarkill certainly got to see more action in the Dungeon than Lissard. He made appearances in the Dungeon in both his series, providing a real threat to the future of the quest. He was no pushover to deal with, though, as the use of either magic or an object would always be required. Skarkill proved himself as a dangerous enemy when he ended the quest of Richard II in series 5. Armed with the memory of this, it was always possible for the viewers to visualise what would happen if subsequent teams failed to deal with Skarkill, unlike with characters who threatened but never killed. Despite Lord Fear's initial derisory manner towards Skarkill, he clearly had quite a bit of power in the Dungeon as he was the master of the goblins, creatures that had proven themselves quite capable of being fatal foes in their renegade days in series 3 and 4. As time went on, Fear became much less hostile towards Skarkill, eventually discussing evil plans with him almost as an equal.

Disadvantages: Well, Skarkill wasn't the sharpest tool in the box, was he? Why let your prisoner go if he gives you gold when you could capture him and take the gold anyway? It could be said that Skarkill simply fell into his role as Fear's right-hand man after he was crippled by Tiny the hobgoblin at the start of series 6. With one of his legs rendered next to useless, Skarkill was rarely seen early in series 6, and even when he was it was only for Fear to insult him through his magic pool. Skarkill's two brief appearances in the Dungeon later in the series showed him to be slow and clearly not up to the job, and he was defeated easily on both occasions. Perhaps he did not become Lord Fear's right-hand man by his own merits, then, but because it was the only thing he was still capable of doing - hanging around his master and playing Placebo. Thinking of Skarkill in terms of Lord Fear's seneschal, then, may not show him at his best. Although he started off with a clear role in the Dungeon that he proved himself capable of fulfilling, it might be fair to say that he became a

redundant character after his foot was crushed. Of course, what started as his foot soon became his whole leg, and then the other leg was crushed by Red Death landing on Mount Fear! Poor Skarkill - it was a sorry end for him. Perhaps it was a bad move from roaming the Dungeon to hanging around Lord Fear.

LISSARD: Lord Fear's seneschal in series 7 and 8, Lissard picked up where Skarkill left off. He was a green-skinned amphibious person from Atlantis, who delighted in cooking up devious dungeoneer-stopping plans with Lord Fear. Somewhere under the makeup was actor Clifford Barry.

Advantages: Lissard was hired to be Lord Fear's seneschal, and he carried out this role admirably and faithfully during his time on Knightmare. There were very few episodes in the final two series that did not feature Lissard helping Lord Fear to concoct devious plans to stop the kidsies from winning. Lissard's plans were not without success, as Ben III in series 7 discovered. Lissard had secreted the letters to an important spell throughout level two that Ben had to find and collect. When the team missed one of these, they were killed off on the Trial by Spikes. Although Lissard made practically no personal appearances in quests, it is perhaps unfair to use this as an advantage Skarkill has over him.

A new goblin master, Raptor, was brought in to replace Skarkill in the Dungeon, while Lissard took over his role as Lord Fear's chief henchman. Lissard fulfilled the role he was designated with nothing to quibble about, and on the rare occasions when we were given evidence of his exploits in the Dungeon, it was clear that he was not without skills of his own. Towards the end of series 7, Lissard managed to break the power of Grimaldine, who was a powerful mage, by breaking his magic staff into four pieces. There can also be no doubt that Lissard was an original and striking character, with his green face, red-rimmed eyes and hissing, lisping voice that added *ness* onto the end of some words, the classic being Lordness. He therefore made his mark on Knightmare from the start, and proved himself to be a worthy member of the Opposition.

Disadvantages: Lissard was clearly brought in simply to replace Skarkill - someone had decided that Lord Fear looked good with a buddy-henchman, so Lissard was created for this purpose. Such was his primary role that he was always something of a joke, with his ridiculously over-the-top mannerisms and way of speaking. Unlike Skarkill, Lissard was a one-

dimensional caricature who experienced no character development whatsoever and so all of his appearances were pretty much the same as each other, unlike Skarkill's. Lord Fear clearly saw Lissard as something of a joke, constantly mocking his appearance, voice and smell - Lissard was there to get a laugh out of the viewers by being Fear's folderol, as it were. All that might not be so bad on its own, but my main objection to Lissard is his lack of appearances in the quest.

At the very end of series 7 he has about five seconds of screen-time with Barry and Hordriss after he has been changed back from his Marta disguise, then he slinks off almost immediately. I was hoping for at least a few words with Barry in this scene, but no such luck. In the next series Lissard is confined solely to wandering around Marblehead as Fear unwittingly reveals all his plans to spying dungeoneers, and he continues to be pretty much just the butt of Lord Fear's jokes and insults.

So, do you know which is your favourite yet? I think Skarkill is my favourite overall, and I certainly think he is the more well-rounded character and the biggest threat to the quest. Still, there's no denying that Lissard will always be a very memorable character, not least because of his striking appearance. What do you think, readers?

POETRY CORNER

Here is an account of possibly my favourite ever really abysmal quest, that of Akash and his "Surrey maidens" in series 2.

A stranger bunch could never be
Than Akash and his maidens three.
They chose the doorway that was right,
Then the Troll caused a big fright.
His pacifying was a good call,
Then on to the talking wall.
With magic aid the score was one,
Would this team soon be undone?
The choice of objects: very poor.
Should have had that ice for sure!
Through the green-hued hall of dread,
Lillith had a throbbing head.
Without the ice pack Akash fell,
Quest was over, just as well!

PUZZLE ANSWERS

Challenge question: Smirkenorff. For those of you who said Lord Fear, remember I said to be seen, not heard.

Quotes:

1. Golgarach. Series 3, episode 13. Martin II.
2. Rothberry. 7, 1. Simon IV.
3. Gundrada. 4, 8. Simon III.
4. Merlin. 1, 3. Simon I.
5. Greystagg. 6, 10. Ben II.
6. Maldame. 8, 5. Nathan.
7. Lillith. 2, 10. Stuart.
8. Brother Mace. 5, 9. Jenna.
9. Treguard. 5, 1. Catherine.
10. Mogdred. 2, 5. Mark.
11. Granitas. 2, 7. Neil.
12. Elita. 6, 6. Alan.
13. Lord Fear. 8, 1. Richard III.
14. Merlin. 4, 16. Giles.
15. Folly. 1, 5. Daniel I (Danny).
16. Aesandre. 5, 12. Chris III.
17. Mogdred. 3, 6. Leo.
18. Brother Strange. 7, 10. Julie II.
19. Dwarf. 2, 3. Chris I.
20. Treguard. 8, 1. Richard III.